

Overton Parish Council Strategy

April 2025 to March 2027

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Strategy

This document outlines the strategic vision, priorities, and action plan for Overton Parish Council over the next 2 years. It serves as a roadmap for decision-making and resource allocation to ensure the community's needs are met effectively.

1.2 About the Parish

Overton Parish lies in North Hampshire, with the population centres of Basingstoke, Winchester, Andover and Newbury to its east, south, west and north respectively, all accessible within a half-hour journey by car. Originally centered around St. Mary's Church to the north of the river, Overton was established around 1218 as a market town by the Bishops of Winchester. Several narrow central roads remain, forming a grid pattern, while the width of Winchester Street reflects its former use for fairs and markets. Whilst predominantly rural as a parish, the village of Overton has seen significant development spreading out beyond the river valley and up onto the surrounding hills. In 2021, the population of Overton reached 4,700. Compared with England as a whole, the demographics show a comparatively older population, with the 15-39 age group accounting for only 24% of local residents compared with 32% nationally.

2. Vision and Mission

2.1 Vision Statement

The Vision for the neighbourhood area in 2040 is:

"A place that remains a rural village surrounded by open countryside. A place where the natural environment and biodiversity is protected and enhanced. Growth has not undermined the landscape and has preserved the essential character of the parish, village and outlying hamlets and has maintained important views into and from the countryside. The sense of community has not been diminished. The commercial activity within the parish has also expanded on the back of the growth. The historic centre of the village remains the hub of the community offering a diverse choice of retail and hospitality opportunities to locals and visitors alike. A place where all residents, young, old and with

any disability, have easy access to the countryside and where the green and blue spaces both reach into and are maintained within the village centre”.

2.2 Mission Statement

To fulfil the duties and responsibilities of a parish council whilst promoting the interests of the parishioners by communicating efficiently using public consultation and co-operation with other government bodies and community organisations to provide services and facilities. In addition, the council will protect Overton’s heritage and the rural village environment while being mindful of future opportunities. It will nurture a strong community spirit and promote culture, leisure and sports opportunities to foster the health and well-being of the parishioners.

3. Community Engagement and Needs Assessment

3.1 Consultation Process and Key Findings

A survey carried out in 2022 asked the residents of Overton ‘What things are most important to you about living in Overton?’ 467 residents responded to the survey (from a population of 4700), and the six characteristics of the village voted ‘Very Important’ by the most respondents were -

- The countryside around the village
- The views from the village to the countryside
- Footpaths within the village and to the surrounding countryside
- The sense of community
- Green spaces within the village
- Local shops and businesses

From these most valued characteristics, the Vision and Objectives for the Overton were developed.

4. Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Key areas of focus for the council and with specific objectives :

Infrastructure & Environment: Improve green spaces, and promote sustainability initiatives. Lobby the local authority to improve local roads.

- To help to maintain, enhance and improve access to the countryside around Overton, champion the improvement of biodiversity and support the work of local environmental protection and sustainability groups in the parish.
- To promote active travel generally and continue to pursue improvements at, and access to, Overton Railway Station

Community Wellbeing: Enhance health, safety, and leisure facilities.

- To improve the facilities at the recreation grounds managed/owned by Overton Parish Council.
- To work to improve all other amenities within the village including open/green spaces and village halls.
- To support the work of clubs, societies and cultural activities in the village

Economic Development: Support local businesses and employment opportunities.

- To improve the commercial heart of the village with regard to enhancing its look, feel and encourage the use of and support local businesses.
- To expand commercial activity through increased liaison with businesses and those that represent them.

Governance & Engagement: Increase transparency and public participation in Overton Parish Council business.

- To operate in a transparent, accountable, and lawful manner providing access to the key documents and policies that ensure we meet our statutory duties and uphold high standards in public service.

5. Action Plan

5.1 Priority Actions

Priority Area	Action	Lead Responsibility	Timeline	Expected Outcome
Community well-being	Install new play area at Sapley Lane Playing Field	Anne Phillips and Rodney Hunter	By the end of 2025	New play area for Overton young people
Community well-being	Install goal post(s) and possibly net(s) at Sapley Lane Playing Field	Rodney Hunter	Summer 2025	An enhanced kick about area in the south of the village
Environment	Have bollards installed along specific entrances to the Harrow Way	Richard Cook	Summer 2025	Protection of the Harrow Way in winter
All	Get Neighbourhood Development Plan 'Made'	Richard Oram and NDP group	Autumn 2025	A Made plan
Economic Development	Establish a regular programme of activity for the Village Tidy Group consisting of litter picking, cleaning footpaths and cleaning infrastructure	Ian Elkins. Bob Denny and Village Tidy Group	Summer 2025	Improved appearance of parish
Governance and Engagement	New Website launched	Diane Jackson	Summer 2025	Improved access to information about the Parish
Economic Development	Re- paint exterior of St Mary's Hall and undertake other repairs	Gary Chapman	Spring/Summer 2025	Improved look to the village centre
Infrastructure and Environment	Work with other agencies to keep the 74 bus operating after HCC withdraws funding from Oct 25	John Raw	Spring/Summer 2025	Keep a service that provides essential transport around the village for those that do not/cannot drive
Economic Development	Repair/renew street seat/benches bus shelters	Gary Chapman	By Dec 2025	Well maintained assets
Community Well-being	Investigate enhancement of Edward Kersley playing field	Anne Phillips and Rodney Hunter	Spring 2026	Plan for enhancement of Edward Kersley PF

6. Financial Planning and Resource Allocation

6.1 Budget Overview

The parish council funding comes from the parish council element of Local Council Tax. Each year the parish council approves a budget of income and expenditure for the coming year. The difference between the income and expenditure is requested via a precept request to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. If this request is approved it becomes part of the new council tax levied on parishioners from April each year.

Budgeted income and expenditure for 2025/26 can be found in Appendix 1.

The parish council also receives a grant from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council each year towards the cost of grass cutting. The amount received for 2025/26 was £1622.

6.2 Cost Estimates

There will be costs related to some of the priority actions for the next two years.

Principally they are:

- New play provision and goal posts at Sapley Lane Playing Field – funding from CIL monies
- Completion of the Neighbourhood Development Plan – budgeted
- New website – budgeted
- Re-painting of St Mary's Hall – budgeted and CIL monies
- 74 bus – budgeted
- Renew sets, benches and bus shelters – budgeted and CIL monies

The other priority actions come with no cost to the parish council other than volunteer time.

7. Governance and Compliance

7.1 Decision-Making Framework

Decisions are made at monthly parish council meetings and monthly planning sub-committee meetings. Votes are taken and a simple majority for or against is recorded in the minutes.

An agenda for full parish council and planning subcommittee meetings are published 5 working days before the meeting. Only items on the agenda are discussed at these meetings. The public are given an opportunity to speak in public time which is the first item on the agenda for each meeting.

The Parish Council operates under a Code of Conduct which is to a national standard. A copy can be viewed on the parish council website.

From time to time there may be working groups sitting under the parish council umbrella. These all work according to their terms of reference which are agreed by full parish council. These are also available to view on the parish council website.

The parish council and planning subcommittee both have a chairperson who is elected by the parish councillors, usually at the May meeting each year.

The parish council has a number of 'lead' councillors who take a special interest and responsibility in a particular area of parish council work. They do not make decisions on their own but carry out research and report back to the parish council. If a decision is required this is put as a proposal at parish council meeting and voted upon by all councillors.

The current lead councillor areas of responsibility are:

- Planning
- Finance and Insurance
- Environment and biodiversity
- Communication and Marketing
- Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Village Centre, business and tourism
- Transport and Roads
- Footpaths and Rights of Way
- Leisure (playing fields and allotments)
- Assets (buildings, seats, benches and bus stops)

7.2 Transparency and Accountability

Overton Parish Council operates under the Model Publication Scheme prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. The scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where the authority holds this information.

Classes of information:

- Who we are and what we do.
- Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
- What we spend and how we spend it.
- Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.
- What our priorities are and how we are doing.
- Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
- How we make decisions.
- Policy proposals and decisions. Decision-making processes, internal criteria and procedures, and consultations.
- Our policies and procedures.
- Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 Monitoring

The actions will be monitored each quarter at OPC meetings in June, September, December and March.

8.2 Review Process

This document will be reviewed every two years by a sub group of Parish Councillors. It should be reviewed and finalized by December biannually so the resulting document can inform budget setting and precept requests in the following January. The next review to be concluded by December 2026. The one after by December 2028.

Adopted by Overton Parish Council on 13th May 2025.

Appendix 1. Budget for income and expenditure 2025-26

2025/2026	Expenditure	Subtotals	Income
Allotments			
Rent Income			£ 1,902
Water	£ 550		
Grounds Maintenance	£ 1,320		
Annual Meeting	£ 23		
Skip Hire	£ 600		
General Maintenance	£ 250	£ 2,743	
Bank Transactions			
Charges	£ 150		
Interest		£ 150	£ 1,500
Cemetery			
Water	£ 440	£ 440	
Councillor Expenses			
Travel	£ 100		
Training	£ 200		
Printing	£ 100		
APM	£ 250	£ 650	
Grants			
General Grants	£ 3,000		
Sustainable Overton	£ 2,500		
Lordsfield Pool	£ 5,000		
Walking Group	£ 600		
#74 Bus	£ 7,500		
		£ 18,600	
Hire Fees			
Community Centre Meetings	£ 575		
Saturday Market Fees	£ 40		
St Mary's Hall	£ 40		
Church Rooms			
St Lukes		£ 655	
Insurance			
Policy Fee	£ 4,325	£ 4,325	
Live Well Longer			
Mobile phones	£ 180		
Email accounts	£ 130		
Leaflets and posters	£ 250		
Counselling Service at Community Centre	£ 264		
Counselling Service Professional oversight	£ 360		
Drop in at Community Centre & Saturday Market	£ 160		
Mileage for client visits	£ 18		
Incidental VA costs	£ 25		
		£ 1,386	
Marketing and Communications			
Editor Fee	£ 1,980		
Printing (Bulpitt)	£ 3,800		
Social Media	£ 1,200		
HCI Fee (website domain)	£ 120		
IT Support	£ 450		
Printing (Walks leaflets)	£ 675		
Website Development	£ 4,500		
Printing General Marketing/ Branding	£ 1,200		
N&V Deliverer Christmas Gifts	£ 450	£ 14,375	

Neighbourhood Plan			
Printing	£ 1,000		
Room Hire	£ 338	£ 1,338	
Parish Council Office			
Accounting System - Scribe	£ 720		
Stationery	£ 200		
Phone - BT	£ 950		
Phone - Mobile	£ 60		
Rent	£ 1,838		
Printing	£ 250		
Postage	£ 20		
		£ 4,038	
Playing Fields			
SLPF - Grounds Maintenance	£ 4,000		
SLPF - Water	£ 550		
SLPF - Inspections Annual Fee BDBC	£ 1,260		
SLPF - Inspections Annual Fee RoSPA	£ 100		
SLPF - General Repairs	£ 1,000	£ 6,910	
EK - Grounds Maintenance	£ 2,545		
EK - Inspections Annual Fees BDBC	£ 1,220		
EK - Inspections Annual Fees RoSPA	£ 100		
EK - General Repairs	£ 2,500	£ 6,365	
		£ 13,275	
Repair & Maintenance			
St Marys Hall	£ 2,700		
Bus Shelters	£ 1,145		
General Maintenance	£ 2,000		
HCC Street Light	£ 185		
		£ 6,030	
Staffing Costs			
Payroll	£ 75		
Salaries Clerk and Minute Secretary	£ 21,219		
Clerk Expenses - Travel	£ -		
Clerk Expenses - Training (incl. CILCA)	£ 539	£ 21,833	
Subscriptions			
CPRE	£ 60		
Halc Affiliation Fee	£ 780		
NALC Levy	£ 300		
Parish Online	£ 120	£ 1,260	
Professional Fees			
Internal Auditor	£ 460		
External Auditor	£ 780		
Simone Surveys (speed sign)	£ 750		
ICO (Information Commissioners Office)	£ 40		
St Mary's Hall Valuation	£ 200		
		£ 2,230	
Volunteer Working Party Projects			
Village Tidy Group	£ 80	£ 80	
Jane Austen Trails	£ -		
Totals	£ 93,407	£ 93,407	£ 3,402